

October 1, 2009

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY  
Civil Action No. 08-1288

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In Regard to the Matter of:

Bayside State Prison  
Litigation

OPINION/REPORT  
OF THE  
SPECIAL MASTER

KENNETH WEST

-vs-

WILLIAM H. FAUVER, et al,  
Defendants.

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\* \* \* \*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2009

\* \* \* \*

BEFORE THE HONORABLE JOHN W. BISSELL, SPECIAL MASTER

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5 Transcript of proceedings in the above  
6 matter taken by Theresa O. Mastroianni, Certified  
7 Court Reporter, license number 30X100085700, and  
8 Notary Public of the State of New Jersey at the  
9 United States District Court House, One Gerry Plaza,  
10 Camden, New Jersey, 08102, commencing at 11:36 AM.  
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25

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2 A P P E A R A N C E S:

3

4 JAIME KAIGH, ESQUIRE  
32 NORTH BLACK HORSE PIKE  
5 BLACKWOOD, NEW JERSEY 08012  
856-232-3337  
6 856-232-4561  
ATTORNEYS FOR THE PLAINTIFFS

7

8

9 ROSELLI, GRIEGEL, LOZIER & LAZZARO, PC  
BY: MARK ROSELLI, ESQUIRE

10

- and -

11

BY: KENNETH W. LOZIER ESQUIRE  
1337 STATE HIGHWAY 33  
HAMILTON SQUARE, NEW JERSEY 08690  
12 609-586-2257  
ATTORNEYS FOR THE DEFENDANTS

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1 JUDGE BISSELL: We are reopening  
2 proceedings in the matter of Kenneth West, docket  
3 number 08-1288 and the following will constitute the  
4 Special Master's determination regarding his  
5 complaint.

6 This opinion/report is being issued  
7 pursuant to the directives of the Order of Reference  
8 to a Special Master and the Special Master's  
9 Agreement and the guiding principles of law which  
10 underlie this decision to be applied to the facts  
11 upon which it is based as set forth in the jury  
12 instructions in the Walker and Mejias jury charges to  
13 the extent applicable to the allegations of Mr. West.

14 As finalized after review under Local  
15 Civil Rule 52.1, the transcript of this oral opinion  
16 will constitute the written report required by  
17 paragraph seven of the Order of Reference to a  
18 Special Master.

19 Mr. West was housed in F Unit at the  
20 time of an incident or one might call a progressive  
21 series of incidents thereafter occurring on the 25th  
22 of August, 1997 toward the end of the lockdown  
23 period.

24 The triggering incident in the dayroom  
25 of F Unit at that time I find is most accurately and

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1 credibly described by the testimony of then  
2 Corrections Officer Recruit Shirley Tozer, T-O-Z-E-R,  
3 now Shirley Royal, when she testified on March 10th,  
4 2009. The excerpt involved here appears between  
5 pages 196 and 200 of the transcript generated at that  
6 hearing on that date.

7 The questioning begins on this subject:

8 "Question: Sitting here in this  
9 courtroom, do you recognize Inmate Kenneth West?

10 "Answer: Yes.

11 "Question: Do you remember what the  
12 charge was that you wrote against Inmate Kenneth West  
13 and the circumstances surrounding it?

14 "Answer: .402, being in an  
15 unauthorized area.

16 "Question: Can you tell us why you  
17 wrote that charge?

18 "Answer: The facility had imposed a  
19 red line system, put red tape in many, many places  
20 and the inmates were not supposed to cross over those  
21 red lines, or even actually step on them.

22 "Question: Was that system implemented  
23 after the death of Fred Baker?

24 "Answer: Yes.

25 "Question: And do you know what the

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1 purpose of that was, why they implemented that  
2 system?

3 "Answer: Officer safety, I would  
4 imagine.

5 "Question: Was it to sort of give some  
6 distance?

7 "Answer: To keep you out of the  
8 space -- the direct space, you know.

9 "Question: Between an officer and an  
10 inmate?

11 "Answer: Yes.

12 "Question: Okay. Do you remember  
13 specifically when that red line system was put in  
14 place? Do you have a recollection?

15 "Answer: I can only say August.

16 "Question: Okay. Now, August 25th,  
17 1997, you told us you were working second shift in F  
18 Unit; is that correct?

19 "Answer: Yes.

20 "Question: And did there come a time  
21 when there was an incident with Inmate West that led  
22 to a charge?

23 "Answer: Yes.

24 "Question: Can you tell us what you  
25 recall?

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1 "Answer: The inmate approached the  
2 area, came across the red line, and when he was told  
3 that he couldn't get on to the red line, he was  
4 agitated by that and walked away, and called me an  
5 asshole.

6 "Question: Do you remember why he  
7 entered the area?

8 "Answer: He, according to what I  
9 recall, he was bringing mail, maybe to be mailed. I  
10 don't think he was picking up mail. He was bringing  
11 mail to be mailed out.

12 "Question: And you were there at the  
13 desk or the podium?

14 "Answer: Yes.

15 "Question: And was it a podium, was it  
16 a desk, how would you describe the setup?

17 "Answer: Podium, tall, like a work --  
18 a gray metal -- I don't know what they really are  
19 technically called, but we called them a podium.

20 "Question: And was there a chair for  
21 you to sit at?

22 "Answer: Yeah, there is usually a  
23 stool, couple chairs, plastic chair, maybe.

24 "Question: But this podium would be  
25 higher than a normal table or desk?

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1 Answer: Oh, yes. If I'm standing at  
2 the podium at my height, my eyes would just come  
3 across the top of it.

4 "Question: And then the chair would  
5 really be a stool of some type?

6 "Answer: Yes.

7 "Question: Now, do you recall actually  
8 seeing Inmate West enter the area and cross the red  
9 line?

10 "Answer: Yes.

11 "Question: Okay. And what did you do  
12 when you saw that?

13 "Answer: I told him he was on the red  
14 line, and that's obviously restricted area,  
15 unauthorized area for any convict to be in.

16 "Question: And you told him that  
17 because that's what the rule was, that he was not  
18 supposed to be in that area, correct?

19 "Answer: Yes.

20 "Question: And then his response, I  
21 think you said he sort of became agitated in some  
22 type?

23 "Answer: Yes.

24 "Question: In some fashion? And can  
25 you tell us more of what you recall?



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1 "Answer: He called me an asshole, and  
2 walked to the phones and proceeded to attempt to make  
3 a phone call.

4 "Question: Okay. Now, when you first  
5 told him that he had crossed the line, at that point,  
6 was it your intention to issue a disciplinary of any  
7 type?

8 "Answer: No. Not at all.

9 "Question: After he called you an  
10 asshole, did you then decide that you were going to  
11 write a disciplinary for him coming across the red  
12 line?

13 "Answer: Because of his attitude and  
14 agitation, not necessarily referring to me or anybody  
15 as an asshole."

16 That's a description of the events at  
17 that time. Ms. Tozer further testified, and once  
18 again I believe accurately, that Mr. West was asked  
19 to go to his bunk to get his ID which he did and  
20 return to the area. And at this time two officers  
21 essentially on a roving patrol, Officers Koerner and  
22 Fronczek were there, they cuffed Mr. West and held  
23 him in the day room without any particular incident  
24 waiting for an escort unit to arrive to take him to  
25 lockup.

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1                   That escort unit did arrive, it was a  
2   Bayside Prisoner Response Team, not a SOG team,  
3   although they were geared up, it appears. That  
4   response team consisted of Officers David Vastano,  
5   V-A-S-T-A-N-O, Ronald Callahan, William Nessen,  
6   N-E-S-S-E-N, Arwin Dusenko, D-U-S-E-N-K-O, and  
7   William Ruff, and their supervisor, Sergeant Donald  
8   Zawojski.

9                   At this point the evidence somewhat  
10   diverges in connection with what occurred when the  
11   response team endeavored to secure Mr. West for a  
12   transport to B Unit lockup.

13                   The events in question eventually led  
14   to an Internal Affairs investigation and a  
15   significant point or possible event in that  
16   investigation focused around whether or not the  
17   inmate, Mr. West, kicked one of the officers in the  
18   prison response team, namely Officer Ruff.

19                   A number of statements were taken, most  
20   of them introduced into evidence, either with  
21   separate exhibit numbers or as a part of P-172 which  
22   is the full administrative investigation report from  
23   Internal Affairs of this incident.

24                   Reports from Mr. Koerner with regard to  
25   when Mr. West allegedly kicked Mr. Ruff included a

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1 statement that it occurred when they were exiting F  
2 Unit, and another one when the response team escorted  
3 him.

4 A report of Sergeant Zawojski, by  
5 implication at least, indicated that the kick  
6 actually happened in F Unit. And another report of  
7 his says: "As we began to remove Inmate West from  
8 the corner of F Unit, he kicked Officer Ruff in the  
9 knee".

10 Officer Ruff, in one of his reports,  
11 indicated that he was kicked in the right leg from  
12 behind. Once again, with an inference that it  
13 occurred in F Unit itself in the immediate vicinity  
14 of their exiting the premises.

15 Officer Nessen said this occurred as we  
16 started to escort Mr. West. Officer Vastano,  
17 interestingly enough in his report appearing at Bates  
18 stamp page number 5902 in P-172, did not mention that  
19 the kicking occurred.

20 Another officer's report appearing at  
21 5903 says, while we were escorting the inmate to  
22 lockup. Mr. Callahan indicated it was while we were  
23 attempting to take control of the inmate for  
24 transport to lockup. Endeavoring to read these  
25 reports and make a determination at least as to what

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1 the response team's position was leads me to draw the  
2 inference, I think appropriately so, that according  
3 to them, this incident occurred, and the kicking  
4 actually did, in fact, take place while they were in  
5 F Unit, albeit at the point of exiting.

6 Ms. Tozer, however, in the day room, in  
7 the immediate vicinity of this event, whose decision  
8 it was to write a charge (even though it may not yet  
9 have been written), and in a position definitely to  
10 observe what was taking place in that immediate area,  
11 makes no mention whatsoever of Inmate West kicking  
12 Mr. Ruff or any other officer. Her statement, I  
13 think marked into evidence independently as Exhibit  
14 D-620, but nevertheless also appearing as a part of  
15 P-172 beginning at Bates stamp page 5894, after her  
16 discussion of the preliminary events continues on  
17 page 5895: "At this time I saw the response team  
18 enter the unit and escort Inmate West out of the  
19 unit, down the steps and onto the grassy area in the  
20 direction of A/B Unit. I then returned to my normal  
21 duties."

22 So it's clear from that statement  
23 relatively contemporaneous, September 11th, 1997,  
24 that she did observe this segment at least of Mr.  
25 West's custody by the response team. She continues

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1 in that statement and I continue this quote: "At no  
2 time did I witness any unusual incidents. There was  
3 at no time any assaults by compound patrol or the  
4 response team toward this inmate nor did I witness  
5 the assault of any officer from the response team or  
6 compound patrol by this inmate."

7 Now, in the course of her testimony  
8 here in court Ms. Tozer, one might say, somewhat  
9 compromised that statement and in some instances  
10 indicated that she may not have been watching these  
11 events surrounding Mr. West quite as completely as  
12 she was, ostensibly due to other duties. I'm not  
13 exactly sure why this approach took place. Ms. Tozer  
14 has been retired from Bureau of Prisons employment  
15 for some time. Perhaps it's the product of her  
16 realizing that her written statement contradicted  
17 those of others. But in any event, certainly I find  
18 it more credible that her statement at the time, when  
19 not a part of this response team and with no need, if  
20 you will, to get the story straight, stated very  
21 clearly that at the same point in time when the other  
22 members of the response team are alleging that  
23 Mr. West kicked Mr. Ruff, she saw no such thing.

24 And so I reach the determination here  
25 that that didn't happen, that he did not kick Mr.

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1 Ruff.

2 I find further that there were, indeed,  
3 injuries inflicted by the response team upon Mr. West  
4 as reflected in P-171 which are the photographs,  
5 albeit by photocopy, and also as discussed and  
6 described at some length in the Internal Affairs  
7 investigation report.

8 I don't think it's necessary to  
9 reiterate those at length, that report is in evidence  
10 and can be consulted for that purpose.

11 These injuries happily were relatively  
12 minor injuries, cuts and bruises sustained due to the  
13 employment of excessive and, frankly, unnecessary  
14 force in the course of his transport to the lockup  
15 unit.

16 Upon arrival at the lockup unit I find,  
17 as Mr. West testified, that his shoulder, which was  
18 indeed injured as the pictures and analysis reflect,  
19 was slammed into the door of the unit in order to  
20 open it. This, once again, is consistent with a  
21 rough and unnecessary and excessive use of force in  
22 the course of the transport of this plaintiff.

23 I find that the reports and testimony  
24 of the response team members that the plaintiff was  
25 combative in the course of his transport is not

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1 credible and like the fabricated kicking incident,  
2 was employed here as a shield, so to speak, for their  
3 own misconduct and use of excessive force in the  
4 transport.

5                   However, I find, as reflected in the  
6 photographs taken on the 27th of August, some  
7 two days later, that the injuries depicted in those  
8 photographs, including those to plaintiff's shoulder  
9 resulting from the use of it to open the door into  
10 the unit, are the injuries which, in fact, occurred.  
11 I do not find it credible as described by Mr. West  
12 that other events transpiring supposedly on that day  
13 (such as his head being slammed into the B Unit  
14 podium) and later, upon his imminent departure to  
15 Trenton State Prison, in fact, occurred. I find  
16 this, frankly, is an effort to gild the lily and  
17 enhance his claims in this matter against the  
18 facility and its officers.

19                   I do not find that these efforts, under  
20 any legal or equitable doctrine, bar his recovery for  
21 the injuries which he did, in fact, sustain. But I  
22 do not find them credible to support the allegations,  
23 among other things, that his head was slammed into  
24 the podium and/or that he was otherwise mistreated in  
25 the moments and minutes subsequent to his arrival at

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1 the facility.

2 He was, of course, seen by medical  
3 personnel as best my recollection recalls, both on  
4 the 25th in the evening itself and later on the 27th  
5 with reports of the injuries actually sustained and  
6 not those which he has fabricated.

7 With regard to specifically his alleged  
8 assault by officers on the eve of his relocation to  
9 Trenton State Prison, those are not substantiated  
10 and, frankly, make no sense. Here is a man already  
11 marked to some extent and with reports to that  
12 effect. And for the officers at this point to  
13 reassault him with the potential of leaving  
14 additional evidence of assaults and injuries, which  
15 would have to be revealed and reviewed in either an  
16 exit medical exam from Bayside State Prison or an  
17 intake medical exam at Trenton State Prison or both,  
18 makes no sense and would indicate the willingness of  
19 these custodial officers, now about to be rid of a  
20 particular inmate, to run a substantial risk to their  
21 own careers. And once again, I see no grounds for it  
22 and it makes no inherent sense either. There is no  
23 reason to take this risk as a matter of logic. And  
24 with the claims of these injuries otherwise  
25 unsubstantiated, I find that they have not been



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1 proven here.

2           There were also indications from the  
3 record that, upon his arrival at Trenton State  
4 Prison, now out of the clutches, if you will, of  
5 Bayside and its officers, he sought no follow-up  
6 medical treatment. One would have expected such a  
7 request had he been beaten only hours before.

8           As far as the scope and extent of his  
9 injuries are concerned, Mr. West did have lingering  
10 shoulder pain over time, although it has lessened by  
11 now. It did restrict his weight-lifting activities,  
12 but there was no significant permanency from any of  
13 these injuries and, in fact, when being admitted to  
14 Southwoods State Prison slightly less than a year  
15 later, on or about the 18th of June of 1998, he made  
16 no complaints of any lingering injuries afflicting  
17 him at that time.

18           There was, therefore, to the extent  
19 described and found above indeed excessive,  
20 unnecessary and sadistic force employed upon Mr. West  
21 within the contemplation of those legal principles.  
22 However, in light of the fact that the injuries and  
23 hence this punishment inflicted upon him in the  
24 course of his transit to the lockup unit was not  
25 prolonged, repeated or resulting in extremely severe

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1 injuries, I find, therefore, that while this is  
2 actionable for the recovery of compensatory damages,  
3 I do not find that this assault visited upon him rose  
4 to the level of being so egregious as to support a  
5 claim for punitive damages, at least against the  
6 identified officers here; once again, as the punitive  
7 damages standard is applied in the jury instructions  
8 mentioned above and incorporated here by reference.

9 I realize, of course, that there may  
10 come a time when an issue arises as to whether there  
11 is any significance of this conduct with regard to  
12 the establishment of supervisory liability and/or  
13 punitive damages in that respect. However, that  
14 awaits another day. And I will impose no punitive  
15 damages here.

16 Finally, although not every item of  
17 evidence has been discussed in this opinion/report,  
18 all evidence presented to the Special Master was  
19 reviewed and considered.

20 This is a case (unlike most) where we  
21 do, indeed, have identifiable defendants, namely the  
22 members of the Bayside State Prison Response Team. I  
23 might add that I find no basis for any liability  
24 against either the podium officer identified  
25 previously or the two initial responders who placed

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1 this man in handcuffs. The injuries were inflicted  
2 by the response team. I find that the injury  
3 inflicted here was actionable. I find that although  
4 originally and initially acute, it has not remained  
5 significantly permanent with any major continuing  
6 pain or significant restriction on Mr. West's  
7 activities.

8 Accordingly, I recommend in this report  
9 that the district court enter an award of  
10 compensatory damages in the amount of \$4,500 in Mr.  
11 West's favor and that that judgment may specifically  
12 be entered in this matter against the members of the  
13 response team, David Vastano, Ronald Callahan,  
14 William Nessen, Arwin Dusenko, William Ruff and  
15 Donald Zawojski to the extent that any of them are  
16 named defendants in this action. That frankly is  
17 something that's not at my fingertips, but if they  
18 are, then the case has been proven as to them.

19 (Hearing Adjourned)  
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## C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Theresa O. Mastroianni, a Notary Public and Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony as taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place, and on the date hereinbefore set forth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative nor employee nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties to this action, and that I am neither a relative nor employee of such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in the action.



Theresa O. Mastroianni, C.S.R.  
Notary Public, State of New Jersey  
My Commission Expires May 5, 2010  
Certificate No. XI0857  
Date: October 1, 2009

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<b>A</b>	<b>applicable</b> 4:13 <b>applied</b> 4:10 18:7 <b>approach</b> 13:13 <b>approached</b> 7:1 <b>appropriately</b> 12:2 <b>area</b> 5:15 7:2,7 8:8,14,15,18 9:20 12:10,19 <b>arises</b> 18:10 <b>arrival</b> 14:16 15:25 17:3 <b>arrive</b> 9:24 10:1 <b>Arwin</b> 10:6 19:14 <b>asked</b> 9:18 <b>assault</b> 13:5 16:8 18:3 <b>assaults</b> 13:3 16:14 <b>asshole</b> 7:5 9:1 9:10,15 <b>attempt</b> 9:2 <b>attempting</b> 11:23 <b>attitude</b> 9:13 <b>attorney</b> 20:10 20:12 <b>ATTORNEYS</b> 3:6,12 <b>Audubon</b> 2:22 <b>August</b> 4:22 6:15,16 15:6 <b>awaits</b> 18:14 <b>award</b> 19:9 <b>A/B</b> 12:20	<b>Bayside</b> 1:5 10:2 16:16 17:5 18:22 <b>beaten</b> 17:7 <b>began</b> 11:7 <b>beginning</b> 12:15 <b>begins</b> 5:7 <b>believe</b> 9:18 <b>best</b> 16:3 <b>BISSELL</b> 1:21 4:1 <b>BLACK</b> 3:4 <b>BLACKWOOD</b> 3:5 <b>bringing</b> 7:9,10 <b>bruises</b> 14:12 <b>bunk</b> 9:19 <b>Bureau</b> 13:14	<b>clear</b> 12:22 <b>clearly</b> 13:21 <b>clutches</b> 17:4 <b>combative</b> 14:25 <b>come</b> 6:20 8:2 18:10 <b>coming</b> 9:11 <b>commencing</b> 2:10 <b>Commission</b> 20:20 <b>compensatory</b> 18:2 19:10 <b>complaint</b> 4:5 <b>complaints</b> 17:16 <b>completely</b> 13:11 <b>compound</b> 13:3 13:6 <b>compromised</b> 13:9 <b>contemplation</b> 17:21 <b>concerned</b> 17:9 <b>conduct</b> 18:11 <b>connection</b> 10:10 <b>considered</b> 18:19 <b>consisted</b> 10:4 <b>consistent</b> 14:20 <b>constitute</b> 4:3,16 <b>consulted</b> 14:10 <b>contemporane...</b> 12:23 <b>continue</b> 13:1 <b>continues</b> 12:16 12:25 <b>continuing</b> 19:5 <b>contradicted</b> 13:16 <b>control</b> 11:23 <b>convict</b> 8:15 <b>corner</b> 11:8 <b>correct</b> 6:18	8:18 <b>Corrections</b> 5:2 <b>counsel</b> 20:10,12 <b>couple</b> 7:23 <b>course</b> 13:7 14:14,22,25 16:2 17:24 18:9 <b>court</b> 1:1 2:7,9 2:20 13:8 19:9 <b>courtroom</b> 5:9 <b>credible</b> 13:18 15:1,11,22 <b>credibly</b> 5:1 <b>cross</b> 5:20 8:8 <b>crossed</b> 9:5 <b>cuffed</b> 9:22 <b>custodial</b> 16:19 <b>custody</b> 12:25 <b>cuts</b> 14:12 <b>C.S.R</b> 20:19
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